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### Yellowstone fastest growing major county in Montana according to Bureau of Business and Economic Research

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July 24, 1956

By far the fastest growing major county in Montana is Yellowstone, with an increase of 52 per cent in covered employment between 1950 and 1955, according to Montana Business, published monthly by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at Montana State University.

Montana Business uses data on covered employment compiled by the Unemployment Compensation Commission for its comparisons. Covered employment includes all non-agricultural employment except interstate railroads, government, and a few service industries.

Flathead, Missoula, and Cascade counties also had substantial gains - 22, 20, and 18 per cent respectively - the bulletin reports. Of the five major counties, only Silver Bow did not show an impressive growth, with an increase in covered employment of only 2 per cent over the five-year period. Plans for expansion in the Butte mines should step up future growth of the county, the bulletin predicted.

Only Yellowstone, Cascade, Silver Bow, Missoula, and Flathead counties had more than 5000 workers in covered employment in fiscal 1955. Together, these counties employed 52 per cent of total state covered employment in 1955, an increase in their part of the total from 47 per cent in fiscal 1950.

Several smaller counties recorded larger percentage increases than did the larger counties, Montana Business notes. Frequently, the increase was due to one new development or an expansion of a single industry, which resulted in impressive gains, according to the bulletin. In Stillwater county, the reopening of the Moaut mine was largely responsible for an increase of 181 per cent in covered employment between 1950 and 1955. McCone, Treasure, and Dawson counties experienced large increases due to oil activity (128, 114, and 41 per cent). In western Montana,



Mineral and Lincoln counties have made gains in manufacturing employment of 69 and 52 per cent respectively, due to expansion of lumber production.

Twenty-three counties in the state suffered losses in covered employment between fiscal 1950 and 1955. Most are small counties with their combined employment in 1955 equal to only 18 per cent of the state total. The major economic activity is agriculture. The University publication points out that the decline is part of a long-term trend. Most of the counties with employment losses between 1950 and 1955 have been losing population since 1930, as ranches have become larger, the rural population has declined, and opportunities off the farm have also become fewer.

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